Summary of Research

* Games are meant to arouse meaningful immersive experiences.[1. p1]
* Basic elements that comprise every game are - mechanics, story, aesthetics and technology. These are all equally important.
* Each player’s experience is totally unique.
* Educational games have to be designed properly to incorporate engagement that integrates with educational effectiveness the challenge is to find a balance between game-play and learning objectives.
* The goal for the designer is to balance the five elements - flow, immersion, presence, arousal and engagement. [1. p2]
* The learning should impose a cognitive load. So it is not effortless.
* If the learning objectives are discrete from gameplay the game may fail to produce educationally effective experiences[1. p4]
* If the player is bored - he needs to increase the challenge he is facing [1. p7]

Conclusion

In conclusion I have learnt that -

* Player engagement is important.
* The experience needs to be rewarding.
* Non-player characters need to resemble real players as much as possible - since gameplay alongside real players had much higher user engagement.
* The game should give feedback to the user to show how he is performing. In regards to the educational aspect most importantly.

Topic

* Initial idea - Human trafficking
  + Possibly too controversial of a topic.
  + Hard to link it with a ‘mario-like’ game.
* Migration new idea
  + Fits the idea of a side scrolling platformer better - the goal of the game is to reach the end-goal, the destination - like it is for a migrant.
  + Migration and Human trafficking is related. So not too big a change in theme.
  + The game will be an allegory of the story of a migrant and his hardships on the way to a better future. The route and hardships on the way will be exaggerated and gamified.
    - Will look to adapt actual hardships refugees encounter on the way.
  + Different routes - at an interesction the player will have a choice to choose a path/route where to go, with a different NPC at each path.
    - Through careful reading of the storyline and the NPC dialogue the player will be able to choose the best path in the level.
    - The different paths will not just be better/worse, there will be side paths with an NPC telling you different things, eg some refugees need to be rescued for example.
    - Not all paths lead to the end of the level/victory.
    - The player needs to make decision on which NPC to trust.
      * The idea that choices have consequences.
    - NPCs will give you a key to open a door to go a certain way for example.

Mechanics

* Basic inventory system
  + Allowing the user to store a powerup - to use it when needed. Or keys to a door or coins.
  + So the user can bypass a difficult part of the level through the use of a power-up they acquired earlier in the game.
  + Gives the player the choice on when to have a decrease in difficulty due to a power up.
  + Gives an incentive for the player to explore the whole level.
* NPCs
  + NPCs will appear throughout the game levels.
  + They will try to lead you to a certain route.
  + Dialogue system - allowing the player to choose a response to what the NPC says.
  + Basic ‘quest’ system
    - NPC will want you to do a certain thing; eg rescue stranded refugees on a side path.
    - Rewards will be in the form of points, keys to unlock a door or a power up.
  + NPC relations system - NPCs will like a player from 0 to 100 relation points, which will stay consistent throughout the different levels - some NPCs will reappear at different points in the game, giving the player different dialogue/progression options.
* Level Design - non-linear
  + There will be one ‘end goal’ - but there will be more than one path leading to it.
  + Giving the player the choice of the route.

References

[1] S. A. Arnab. (2012) “The Design Principles for Flow Experience in Educational”. *Procedia Computer Science* 15 ( 2012 ) pg78 – 91. Available:

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